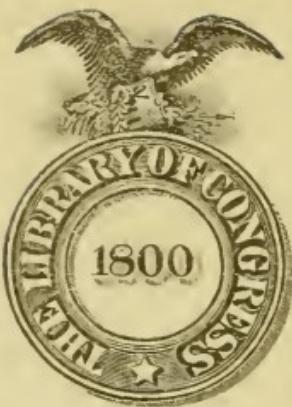


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THE
FREE KNIGHTS :
OR
THE EDICT
OF
CHARLEMAGNE.

676
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A DRAMA,
IN THREE ACTS,
INTERSPERSED WITH MUSIC.

—
BY FREDERICK REYNOLDS.
—

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

(from the first London edition of 1810.)

—
NEW-YORK:
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—
May—1810.

N 3 17

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Prince Palatine	<i>Mr. Egerton</i>
The Abbot of Corbey	<i>Young</i>
Baron Ravensburg	<i>Blanchard</i>
Count Roland	<i>Inclledon</i>
Ravensburg	<i>C. Kemble</i>
Prisoner	<i>Claremont</i>
Bernardo	<i>Chapman</i>
St. Clair	<i>Cresswell</i>
Everard	<i>Atkins</i>
Zastrow	<i>Jefferies</i>
Walbourg	<i>King</i>
Christopher	<i>Fawcett</i>
Oliver	<i>Simmons</i>
1st Falconer	<i>Treby</i>
2d Falconer	<i>Field</i>

Free knights—crusaders—soldiers—falconers.

Countess Roland	<i>Mrs. Davenport</i>
Ulrica	<i>Dickons</i>
Agness	<i>H. Johnston</i>
Dancers—attendants.	

Scene—Westphalia.

THE
FREE KNIGHTS.

A C T I.

SCENE I—a spacious cavern, veined with ore, marking the remains of a sulphur mine—at a distance a sheet of water, with a lamp hanging over it; and cells, with iron grating before them—on the right a large brazen door; on the left another, with steps leading up to it.

EVERARD discovered.

(knocking and trumpets)

Ever Hark! another victim! (unbars the door)
Enter ZASTROW, leading in a prisoner whose eyes are bandaged.

Pris. Whither! oh, whither would ye lead me?—
To pass, apparently, o'er rugged rocks, ascend high mountains, and descend to vaults; hear the close baying of the forest wolf, and the loud cataract's terrific roar; and now, e'en now, perhaps to stand upon the verge of some stupendous precipice!

Zas. (removing prisoner's veil.) Behold! behold the precincts of that famed tribunal, that renders justice to the christian cause, and strikes dismay throughout the christian world.

Pris. Merciful heaven ! if justice be the boast of your tribunal, why all this dark, mysterious—

Zas. How !—dare but to whisper one invidious word against an institution that's upheld by—

Pris. (*crossing to Everard.*) To you who seem to wear a human form—to you I make appeal. Some three months past, my interest called me from my native land, here to Westphalia ; and but last night, when all around was calm and still as my own thoughts, a loud terrific knocking at the portal, convulsed my habitation. I rushed forth to know the cause, and by the moon's pale beam, read on a banner fixed into the earth, this awful summons : “ Appear, Augustus Montfort, before the Free Knights ! traitor, appear !”— how, how was I to act ? a stranger to their hidden, mystic forms, I sought my neighbors for inquiry—when, sad reverse ! I, who before was welcomed with their smiles, met, now, such fearful and contemptuous looks, that but for conscious and inherent pride, I had been *then* your victim.

Zast. Ay, none, none dare notice the accused.

Pris. None, save a monk, who, far less worldly than the rest, stopt, and warn'd me to obey this their first summons ; or soon a second, and a third would follow : and, on my then not answering, not only would my sentence be proclaimed, but my best friend, ay, my own son, were he a member of this dread tribunal, would by a solemn oath, be bound to plunge his dagger in his father's heart ! such are free knights !— such the famed members of this lauded court ! and having further learnt, that on the tolling of the midnight bell, at my own gate, or at the citadel, a chosen minister of vengeance passed, to pilot the accused, I went ; and you, through paths most dangerous and inscrutable have brought me to the spot where justice reigns ; if so, give the first proof of justice—trial !—by that I am prepared to stand or fail.

Ever. Trial ! alas ! it may be years--

Pris. Years! I'll not believe it. Where are my judges?

Zast. There! (*pointing to a door*) in full council, electing a free knight. And till that awful ceremony's past, they must not be disturbed; nor then, but by their chief, prince Palatine, who, on returning from the holy wars, comes to consult them on affairs of state. (*music*). Hark! he approaches! this way, to your dungeon—(*prisoner appeals*) Nay, no parleying—you have to cope with those who'll teach you patience and submission.

Music—prisoner is led into his cell, and Zastrow bars the gate, Everard showing compassion. Zastrow opens the door, and the Prince and Walbourg enter.

Prince. So, after an interval of ten long years, again view and welcome the tribunal. Ay, Walbourg, welcome it. For though dark traitors plotting against state, may oft elude the common vigilance which road and open justice takes, yet can they escape the penetrating eye of this deep-searching and all powerful court?—no, unseen, it sees, and unknown, pries into such hidden guilt, that the detected villain, awestruck, cries, “this is not man's, but heaven's unerring vengeance”

Zast. And, once detected, shall free knights forgive? be death the doom of all the prince's foes!

Prince (*after a short pause.*) Ay, death! for long I yearned to daring and to desperate deeds, still deeper must I plunge. But, oh, my friend! in the bright horn of life—(*aside to Walbourg.*)

(*trumpets within—the prince shows surprise.*)

Zast The council are electing a free knight; the gallant Ravensburg.

Prince. Ravensburg! the brave heroic youth, who on the plains of Palestine first stamped the glory of the Christian arms! I guess his honest, loyal motive—he

has heard rumors of a conspiracy, and here, as in the field, would die to serve his prince.

Ever. So he avow'd my liege ; and also that his father, the baron Ravensburg, had urged him ; and though he started when he entered, and wondered much why all our actions should be thus involved in dark obscurity, yet loyal and parental love prevailed, and he rushed in to add one more to the ennobled list that graces the tribunal.

Prince. Exalted Ravenburg ! let all who would uphold their prince's cause like thee, uphold this hallowed institution.

enter RAVENSBURG hastily.

Ravens. In storm, in battle, in the hour of malady, I can brave danger with heroic firmness : but here I own and feel myself so much a coward, that not for worlds would I return and face that scene of unexampled horror ! back with me as I came, and do I live to utter ? your arm—I sicken, faint with apprehension.

Prince. Why. Ravensburg ! the motive loyal and parental love, and yet dare hesitate ! return—perform the solemn rites—

Ravens. What ! swear I will pursue all doomed by this despotic court, and swifter than the lightning strike a deadly weapon e'en in a parent's breast ?—never !

Prince Never !

Ravens. My liege ! error, perhaps, misleads me ; but train'd in camps and the rough school of war, though I ne'er felt that superstitious zeal which founded and supports these unknown judges, yet an enthusiast, in the christian cause, I would maintain as the cause deserves, by open vindication of its rights ; and not by such mysterious arts as truth and justice must disdain to practice.

Prince. Mysterious arts !

Ravens. Aye ; why else at dead of night, with shrouded sight, was I conducted to this drear abyss, through ways apparently unknown to man ? and next

immured in a long vaulted cell, where, as I gazed upon devices framed to heighten my alarm, two ghastly figures, wrapt in mortuary veils, rush'd forth, and laying bare my breast, with a new slaughtered captive's blood, there mark'd a crucifix, and then descending to a deeper cell, where, in full council, round an altar, form'd of human skeletons, the secret knights appeared ; and whilst the cavern rung with the loud shrieks of burning and of tortur'd victims, they proffer'd me their oath—that oath which bound me to destroy friend, father, mistress ! mighty heaven ! let bigots reconcile and court these scenes—I have the common feelings nature prompts, and fly from such barbarity.

(going)

Prince. Hold ! by this desperate, this outrageous act, you have incur'd and well deserve our vengeance ! and who is Ravensburg, that thus condemns what laws, what monarchs, and what pontiffs sanction ; and which to loyal and obedient minds is now the rallying beacon of their hopes ; for who, but this all seeing court, can save your sovereign and friend, father, mistress, from a conspiracy, perhaps as fatal, as that by which the princess, young Theresa, fell ?

Ravens. How !

Prince. Hear me ! some fourteen tedious years are past, since on my loved, lamented, brother's death, this infant, only child, became the victim of that curst Italian fiend, the count Manfredi's treachery, and I, against my will, was hailed prince Palatine. Manfredi perished, not as he merited—he died a natural death—and with him treason seemingly extinct ; I, like the rest of Europe's zealous champions, join'd the crusaders in the holy land : you followed, and you fought, so nobly, I confess, I little thought that Ravensburg would join with new Manfredi's to overthrow his prince.

Ravens. That I ! lives there the slanderous and calumnious wretch, who dare—

(drawing his sabre.)

Prince. (*holding his arm*) The man who will not court the certain means by which foul treason may be traced and crush'd, so far encourages and aids the crime, that he is himself a traitor ! and now, when journeying from my capital, I hither come for counsel and redress—shame ! oh, shame ! if feeling for your prince have no effect, think of an absent father's claims, who, to the loss of a son's valued life, may add his own and others of his race. (*Ravensburg shows alarm takes him aside*)—ay, the tribunal, once offended, will mark and watch with such suspicious eyes, e'en your most distant kindred, that danger, great as your offence, hangs o'er them.

Ravens. They cannot—will not !

Prince. They will And picture the reverse—by linking with this formidable chain, which, though invisible, encircles all, you may watch o'er your house's safety (*noise without, of unbarring gates*) They come—to execute your sentence ! you've no alternative—escape you cannot ! in church, in palace, shall the free knights strike ; therefore instantly complete the forms, and aid your country's and your prince's cause ; or, like a base detested parricide, involve an aged parent's life—

Ravens. Hold ! hold ! a parent's claims are ever paramount ; and heaven, that witnesses my motive, will pardon my consenting.

two FREE KNIGHTS appear at each door, and are advancing with uplifted daggers.

Prince. Forbear ! he is a convert ! he will unite with us in tracing and overthrowing new conspiracy. Come, you're my friend again (*taking Ravensburg's hand*) And whilst Westphalia's my abode, I will sojourn me in your father's house, and witness, as I am told, another ceremony, the happy celebration of your nuptials.

Ravens. My nuptials happy ! well ! well ! lead on. Be this my first, my lesser sacrifice.

[music—a party of free knights enter at one door, carrying a banner, on which is painted the cross, an olive-branch, and a poinard—a party likewise enter at the other door, carrying a banner, on which is painted an eye, surrounded by clouds, and radiated by the sun—Prince, Ravensburg, and train exeunt, free knights following.

SCENE II—an open country: Corbey abbey in the distance—at the right wing, the gates of the town of Corby; at the left wing, the chateau of baron Ravensburg.

enter countess ROLAND and ULRICA, from the chateau.

Countess. So—this is grateful—this is grateful—answer me—who has maintained you? who was educated you? and from whom did you get these fine clothes, and fine manners? from me! you took your manners from me!

Ulrica. Took your manners! lord, aunt! and yet you call me ungrateful!

Countess. And last summer, who took a fine house for you at Aix-la chapelle? and starting you on a matrimonial speculation, so dazzled and decoyed old baron Ravensburg, that he not only invited us to his chateau here, but selected you to be his son's wife, the wife to the hero of Palestine. And yet, though I told you, modern friends followed new houses as naturally as rats run from old ones, you were for my laying out my last florin on a cottage—a cheap paltry cottage!

Ulrica. And why, aunt? because I thought we should both most like what we were most used to.

Countess. Most used to?

Ulrica. To be sure! till a few years ago, when you went to live at Roland castle, didn't you keep such a snug little cot in Franconia, that you might have packed it up, and taken it with you?

Countess. My Franconia cottage! mercy on me!

Ulrica. Yes; dont I still wish myself in that cot? do, I do; for its all very well if a person have the mis-

fortune to be born a fine lady—but to be made one! to be taught to talk without thinking, stare without looking, and be red without blushing! lord! who'd go and waste money at fairs and carnivals, when they might see curiosities in every great house for nothing!

Countess. If you dare hint to baron Ravensburg—

Ulrica. Not I!—I dare no more tell baron Ravensburg what you once were, than I dare tell your rural relations what you now are; for if he knew you were once Winifred Winbuttle, and they knew—lord! lord! if those I so long lived with, if aunt Alice, and her son Christopher—dear darling cousin Christopher!—

Countess. (*who has been walking about in a rage*) Jade! Jezabel! how often must I remind you, that I no longer acknowledge this Franconia relationship? that I am, and have been, since last winter, of pure, noble, norman extraction, and widow of the great count Roland, madam, who, struck with charms, soon married me, madam, and being married, soon died, madam.

Ulrica. Very, very soon. And you may well take it to heart; for, alas! his estate went with his title—went to his nephew, young count Roland, who, after an absence of many years, returned from his travels on that most melancholy day. (*half crying*)

Countess. (*weeping*) He did; and grief, grief prevented my seeing him; but you saw him, Ulrica, and by what I heard of the tender interview, if the count hadn't been suddenly called away again—oh! 'tis a sweet estate! one third of it would be consolation for any loss.

Ulrica. There! you think I'm to exterminate the whole german nobility, whilst I think there are even doubts about the young baron Ravensburg. Again, from my window this morning, again I saw him in close conversation with the sweet interesting Agnes—and if he love an humble orphan, and I love the humble Christopher——now, do, aunt, do let me tell him, and every body, you're become a fine lady: if I dont, they'll never find it out, aunt.

Countess. Talk of your cousin, Christopher ! whom I hav'n't seen for years, and never mean to see again ! peace, I insist ! and for Ravensburg—your betroth'd's—loving Agnes, the baron's dread of that marriage will hasten yours or if it dont, and this string snaps, in young count Roland we've perhaps a better. But see—our host—hush ! for your life not one word of Franconia.

Baron. (speaks without) Now, prepare yourselves to receive our illustrious visitor with the honor due to his rank.

enters.

Why, countess, I've been looking for you every where. What do you think ? the prince Palatine means to copy your example ; like you, he means to be a visitor at my chateau, and be present at the celebration of my son's nuptials. His train have already passed the aqueduct. (*a strain of music*) Hark ! he approaches. (*calls on the servants*) Come along all of you, and make your best bows and curtsies.

the procession enters.

(*after procession*) Now, Ulrica, as I am not one of your silver-toned orators, do you give to the warriors from the Holy land a most harmonious greeting.

RECITATIVE—ULRICA.

With well-earn'd laurels in the christian cause,
Receive, great chief, your native land's applause.

A.I.R.

Famed crusaders ! just as brave,
Form'd a nation's right to save !

Now repose on tranquil plains,
Listen to our dulcet strains.

Peace inviting,
Joy exciting,
Till the foe again assail,
Then the glorious contest hail.

Prince. Delightful! exquisite! (*to Ravensburg, who looks dejected*) nay, Ravensburg, the die is cast, the solemn oath is sworn, and should your altered looks create the least suspicion of what's past, beware! beware! for 'tis a secret that was ne'er divulged—not e'en your chosen partner must suspect that you're invested with a free knight's rank.

Rav. 'Tis sworn—'tis secret.

Baron. (*advancing with all respect towards the prince*) My league, this honor to a poor old simple baron—

Prince. Sir, you've a title that surpasses pedigree. You are the father of the gallant Ravensburg; and since he comes to claim the soldier's brightest, best reward, fair woman's love, I trust to find you have selected one who richly merits such an envied prize.

Baron. (*introducing Ulrica*) This is the lady, your highness; and she not only boasts great rank, and, as you see, great beauty; but she has nothing of what destroyed my matrimonial happiness—no distant relations, no poor cousins, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren, who, on a rich man marrying into a family, actually treat him as private property, and go on getting more cousins.

Prince. (*to Ravensburg*) She seems as artless as if trained in humble unsophisticated life; and I prognosticate, will yield that calm content which I, alas! can never hope to taste—never!—come, let us in, and on to-morrow be the nuptials solemnized. (*Ravensburg appeals*)

enter AGNES.

• *Agnes.* Madam—the—(*countess stops her*)

Prince. Ay, Ravensburg, to-morrow; for, harrassed as we are by foul conspiracy, our stay's precarious; and till we're summon'd to the scene of danger, let loud festivity and outward show dismiss our inward grief.

Ravens. My liege, may I suggest—

Baron. Suggest nothing—tis all settled—the prince has said it. I've said it; and to-morrow the priest shall say it. Lead on—away—and yet bless me, how rude I am. I have introduced your highness only to Ulrica. That, entering the chateau, is her aunt the countess Roland. (*countess curtsies to the prince and exit*) That next to her is Agnes, the poor orphan Agnes.

Ravens. The poor! my liege, though rank nor fortune smiled upon her birth, she is so rich, in more substantial charms, that you, her sovereign, might be proud to boast a daughter of such peerless worth.

Prince. (*starting, and gazing on Agnes with great emotion*) That form, those eyes! that mark'd majestic, ne'er to be forgotten mien! (*Agnes curtsies and exit*) merciful powers! whence came she, Ravensburg? fly, swift recall her! yet hold! for if it prove—impossible, it cannot be!—and the dread vision past, we are ourselves, and hail the festive scene.
{music—*exeunt into the chateau; the baron and Oliver remaining to usher the party in—the baron is following; Oliver stops him.*

Oliver. One word, only one word from your faithful old Oliver, who cant help reminding you that he became your servant this day thirty years.

Baron. I know you cant. You are always reminding me; and if you go on presuming upon long service, and making honesty so very troublesome—give me a civil downright rascal! and so follow, and assist in preparing for the glorious union of the Roland and the Ravensburgs—of two families who boast pedigrees.

Oliver. Granted: but I've seen what you might have seen. Your son dont love Ulrica: he loves my poor dear Agnes!

Baron. Granted. Thanks to the countess, I've seen it ever since he came from the wars; and if Agnes had seen it, she had never seen my house again; but as she chose to be discreet, she shall now see an

union that will blazon our family-hall with norman, saxon, spanish, danish—in short, with heraldry never yet seen or heard of.

Oliver. Stop—one word. (*baron breaks from him, and exit*) So this is love of pedigree: this is because he reckons by titles, not by character. And if a certain lady, whose name I wont mention, were not countess Roland, he'd see she was no more than a deep, decoying, match making—plague on't! I hope she won't next hook him into the noose; for if she had a husband every morning, my life on't, she'd be a widow before night. Oh lord! poor Agnes, poor young master, and poor old Oliver. [*remains in a thoughtful posture.*]

enter CHRISTOPHER through the gates.

Chris. (*looking round*) Dear, dear, what a nice, sweet, pretty place! well, I declare when travellers used to talk of their fine sights, I used to wink and nod, as much as to say, I believe it's all bounce. But when I go back, and describe that object (*pointing to the abbey in the distance*) and this object (*turning round and running against Oliver*)—sir, I beg pardon for calling you an object. But you see I am just come from the woods, sir—from the woods about six leagues off, sir, where I was hawking with my lord, when he—he—he—od'rabbit it!—hit or miss, it will be rare sport.

Oliver. What's sport? and who are you? (*angrily*)

Chris. Why, that's it. I want to know who I am; and perhaps you can tell me. (*gets close to him*) Little Soloman, you see. one of our under falconers, and who has seen all my relations, come t'other day to this town for a basket of provisions for my lord and his hawking party; and as he was staring about, who should he see ushered into a fine house, and hear being call'd by a fine name, but my aunt Winifred—old Winifred Wimbattle, the housekeeper! very well—I couldn't say or unsay this, you know; so I directly gets leave of my lord to come myself, and stare about; for thinks I, if I

am made a fool of, I'm only where I was, you know.
(with affected simplicity)

Oliver. Certainly, or worse; for to suppose I'll stay chattering here about Solomon and Winifred, proves, if not quite, that you are very near an idiot. *(going)*

Chris. (taking his arm) Very—I'm very near an idiot! And yet, do you know, upon my honor, Solomon described every thing! from aunt Winifred, and her great title, down to the Gothic latch'd gate, and the little twaddling old butler who open'd it: he did—and if I could but once—*(looking about)*—only just once—*(seeing the chateau)*—Why, that's it! by Solomon's description, that must be the very house, that the gate, and you—he! he! he!—Come, I'm no fool now! Icod, I see who you are.

Oliver. (standing before the door) Dolt! booby! I leave you to your folly! But I would have you know, there are none in this house, none but the Lady Seraphina, the Countess of Roland—

Chris. Who?

Oliver. The Countess of Roland, and her niece Ulrica; so that's your final answer from the little twaddling old butler. *[exit into the chateau]*

Chris. (strutting, &c.) 'Tis she!—Aunt Winifred, by law, takes a countess's title; and I—pshaw! I'm like other great people, I'll take any thing!—Not so—some threescore hungry, ragged relations, they'll take possession of that beautiful tenement *(pointing to the chateau)*; and Ulrica—sweet Ulrica—will take possession of this beautiful tenement *(himself)*. And then—Oh, my dear Christopher! how you do long for the wedding day!

SONG—CHRISTOPHER.

I.

I'll tap at her door when the morning shall break,
And with the first lark I'll be singing;
I'll whisper quite soft, "Now, my dear love awake,
"For the church bells are merrily ringing.

“ The bridegroom, impatient, no longer can rest :
 “ The bridemen and bridesmaids quite smartly are drest ;
 “ The drums and the fifes so cheerily play,
 “ The shepherds all chaunt a gay roundelay ;
 “ With garlands of roses fair damsels advance,
 “ The young and the old partake in the dance ;
 “ Such mirth and such rapture never were known ;
 “ I’m surpris’d that so long you will tarry :
 “ I prithee, Ulrica—prithee, come down ;
 “ For the sport of all sports is—to marry.”

II

When home we return, we’ll sit down to feast,
 Our friends shall behold us with pleasure ;
 She’ll sip with my lord—I’ll drink with the priest,
 We’ll laugh and we’ll quaff without measure.
 The toast and the joke shall go joyfully round,
 With love and good-humor the room shall resound ;
 The slipper be hid—the stocking let fall,
 And rare blindman’s-buff shall keep up the ball ;
 Whil’st the merry spinette, and the sweet tambourine,
 Shall heighten and perfect the gay festive scene,
 Such mirth and such rapture never were known,
 I’m surpris’d that so long you will tarry :
 I prithee, Ulrica—prithee, come down ;
 For the sport of all sports is—to marry.

[exit into chateau

SCENE III—a splendid gothic hall in the baron’s
 chateau—large folding doors in the centre—two
 state chairs are brought on by two of the baron’s ser-
 vants.

enter RAVENSBURG.

Ravens. To-day, to swear the dire terrific oath,
 “ and on to-morrow be the nuptials solemnized,” In
 all—in all—must Ravensburg be sacrificed? He must—
 his father has committed him! pledged by his promise
 to accept the fair Ulrica’s hand, shall I, perchance, des-
 troy her prospects and her hopes, by basely now re-

tracting? No—though love for Agnes occupies my breast, still is there room for honorable feeling! and be the conflict great as was the last, that feeling shall prevail! this hand shall be Ulrica's—unless—there! there's my hope! now, at the banquet, she besought a private interview; and whilst the festive scene engages all, I've stolen forth to give her here the meeting. What, what would she impart?—and why delay? oh, were her tidings welcome, she would not thus withhold them!

enter AGNES, hastily, not seeing RAVENSBURG.

Agnes. I cannot comprehend! the prince to gaze on me with such emotion! wildly exclaim, “the sight of her is hateful!” and, with the baron, leave the banquet, to be told the whole of my sad history—’tis well! I shall not suffer by the truth; for as I guess, mine is a story to excite more of compassion than resentment.

Ravens. Agnes! speak—what of the prince?

Agnes. Nothing, my Lord; he would know my story, would be told that I, an infant, friendless, fatherless, was nursed and cherished by the baron Ravensburg, who, like the rest, of late has met me with such altered looks! but ’tis of late! for years he called me his adopted child; and you my benefactor’s son, bear witness I banish from my mind the present change and dwell with gratitude on past affection.

Ravens. Tis his new friend, this artful, envious countess! till she became your foe—

Agnes. I know; and how have I offended? still I’ve endeavor’d to obey and please her, and her niece, the fair, the happy—sir, I forget—I came by her desire—the countess having heard of her intention, will not allow of any private interviews, and therefore ’tis Ulrica’s wish, that, as to-morrow is the nuptial day, the day which blesses her, but which—(*bursts into tears*)—I can no more—spare! spare! and pity me!

Ravens. Proceed! for, if I know Ulrica’s heart, you are not messenger of any tidings ungracious to yourself.

Agnes. Indeed, I know not—she was, as she has ever been, most kind and most compassionate ; but, to her wish—she begs you will comply with what is here requested—take it—(*giving him a letter*)—and the hard office o'er, farewell until to-morrow ! and then, no sister's prayers did e'er more pure and fervent flow, than mine shall then, for yours and your Ulrica's happiness.

Ravens. (*having opened the letter*) Stay ! (*reading*) “ Shall I accept his hand, whose heart I perceive to be another's ? and can I wish him to accept mine, who, from early education, am better suited to a far more humble sphere ? no, generous Ravensburg ! remonstrate with your father, and increase the esteem of Ulrica, by wiping away tears, which flow from silent, genuine passion ! hearts such as yours and Agnes' can best reward each other.” Exalted woman ! I will remonstrate with my father—now, instantly, and come what will, no nuptials shall be solemnized, but those which love shall crown—(*taking her hand*)—if you refute not what Ulrica writes.

Agnes. My lord, 'twere affectation to deny what this our mutual and unequall'd friend has now revealed ; but for the rest ! if I am worthy of the son's affection, remember, that I owe it to the father ; and great, however great the sacrifice, still would I rather meet that son's displeasure, than plant a sting in the protecting breast, that warm'd and nourished a forsaken orphan.

Ravens. My father will relent ! hark ! he comes ! the banquet o'er, new revelry succeeds, and now I can partake its joys. Come, the hope that dawns shall lead to lasting sunshine.

enter the BARON'S train, and the PRINCE'S train—the prince and baron last, and together.

Prince. (*aside to the baron*) That is her history ? You have imparted all ?

Baron. That—that is Agnes Lindorf's story.

Prince. And none—none know it !

Baron. None—I've kept it secret, even from her-

self; because, at first, the circumstance exciting interest, I fear'd to lose what might supply a daughter's loss; and, since, not wishing to increase an orphan's suffering—

Prince. (*starting, on seeing Agnes*) Behold again! again it flashes on my mind full confirmation. Take, take her from my sight! Yet, no—that may create suspicion, and Walbourg! Walbourg will, 'ere long return. Oh! were he come! for every moment is an age, till I'm secure! (*half aside*)

Baron. Walbourg! gone! where, my liege?

Prince. (*angrily*) No matter, sir—let the dread interval be filled with these your care-destroying sports. Come, strike!

(*prince and baron seat themselves, and the other characters are ranged on each side*)
dance.

in the midst of which a loud knocking is heard, accompanied by trumpets without. All show alarm, except the prince, who expresses secret satisfaction.

(*music changes*)
folding doors are thrown open by Walbourg, who enters, and points to a black banner, fixed into the ground, on which is written, in golden letters,
“AGNES LINDORF! APPEAR BEFORE THE FREE
NIGHTS.”

(*Agnes stands motionless with terror, then runs wildly about, appealing to the different characters—the Prince menaces—all point to the banner, turn away, and exeunt except Ravensburgh, who is following, when Agnes clings to him, and detains him.*

Agnes. You! you will not forsake me! Grant, grant me but a look!

Ravens. Avoid me! shun me!

Agnes. I swear by him, to whom all crimes are known, I know no more of what I am accused, than does the new-born babe! But think! oh think! I am accused by those, whose names strike terror through the world, and who, by solemn and terrific oaths, are

bound to execute such dreadful deeds, (*Ravensburgh trembles violently*) that you, whose nature must revolt at such barbarity ! you, my kind, only friend ! (*falling on his shoulder.*)

Ravens. Fly ! swift—escape ! (*passing her across him.*) Where ? (*stopping her.*) Whither ! who can elude the penetrating eye of their deep-searching vengeance ? and if you answer not that awful mandate ! All gracious powers ! (*turning aside*)—I am forbidden to advise, nay, even converse with the accused ! And yet, Agnes ! (*turning towards her*) though my whole heart be with thee—farewell ! farewell ! [*embracing her.*]

enter, immediately, PRINCE PALATINE.

Prince. False, perjured Ravensburgh ! (*parting them.*) Away ! and, but that consciousness of guilt prevails, why, traitress ! why this coward fear ? tried and acquitted by this high tribunal, your friends shall welcome you with added honor ! but if you rashly disobey the summons, your death is certain, and you doom those friends—mark that—you doom, perhaps, your dearest friends, to turn assassins, and destroy that life, which, but for selfish and for dastard terror, had been preserved to bless them.

[*Agnes, eagerly regarding Ravensburg, who shows extreme agitation.*]

Agnes. I see ! it breaks ! it bursts upon my mind ! and though none know where the free nights meet, all are acquainted with their dreaded forms ; and soon, and soon will a minister of vengeance come—(*crosses to Ravensburg*)—to summon the accused. (*trumpets*) My Lord—take courage ! I'm no more a coward. (*she takes Ravensburg's hand.*) Feel—do I tremble ? am I by selfish terror influenced ? no, mighty sir, (*to the prince.*) behold what conscious innocence effects ! And see, where sympathy and pity prompts, a woman's spirit emulates your own. (*embraces Ravensburgh.*)

Farewell, kind, generous friend ! Now, heaven protect, and guard me !

[music.—Ravensburg would detain Agnes—the prince prevents him—a Free Knight appears on the terrace—Agnes, all animation, points to the free knight—also blesses Ravensburg—Ravensburg implores heaven in her favor.—Agnes exit rapidly, and Ravensburg is partly persuaded, and partly forced off, by the prince Palatine.

END OF ACT I.

A C T II.

SCENE I—an apartment in the BARON'S chateau—a door leading back to a chamber.

ENTER CHRISTOPHER hastily, through a side door.

Chris. Not here either !—no where to be met with ! bless my soul ! now I am in the house, I might as well be out of it ; for I can't find aunt or cousin ; and the fine company here seem all out of their senses. One pushes me and t'other pushes me, and till I'm sure I'm fine company myself, it won't do for me to push again. Countess !—where are you, aunt countess ? do come, and make me fine company ! oh lord ! I'll try this door (*goes back*;) and I should be haif afraid she kept out of the way because she was ashamed of me, only I know aunt has no pride—not a bit of the gentlewoman about her. [exit affectedly into the chamber.

ENTER COUNTESS ROLAND, leading in ULRICA through the side door.

Countess. There ! and, now, whilst I return, and consult with the baron, I'll take care nobody consults with you. [taking the key out of the door.

Ulrica. Heavens ! what have I done, aunt ?

Countess. What have you not done ? and till you're

wife to Ravensburg, this and the adjoining chamber shall be your prison—it shall! for even if the great young count Roland were to offer marriage, who knows but you may write to him about—“humble sphere,” and “early education.” Write!—nonsense!—why, here I am who never wrote a letter in my life.

Ulrica. This my prison! aunt, my dear aunt, if I have long sickened at this scene of splendid misery, and sigh'd for your sister's calm cottage in Franconia, what must I now, when poor Agnes, and this frightful tribunal—

Countess. My sister's cottage!—

Ulrica. And my cousin Christopher!—

Countess. How! again, again insult me with this low relationship! I'm gone, madam—*Christopher re-enters behind, smiles, rubs his hands, and stops at the door, and listens*) gone to prepare for your marriage with a man of my own rank, madam. And once more take notice, I disclaim, I disown the whole franconia family; and if any poor cousin, niece, or nephew, attempt to hang on me, depend on't they shall hang on something more substantial. Oh! by way of example, only let me catch one of them—just that this frightful tribunal may catch, rack, and torture him into confession of his own and your presumption.

[exit, and violently locking the door after her.

Chris. (groaning loudly) Oh! h! h!

Ulrica. (half turning round) A man! a strange help!

Chris. (advancing, and trying to stop her mouth) Do'nt!

Ulrica. (breaking from him, without seeing his face) Aunt! come back, aunt!

Countess. (without) Not I, I promise you.

Chris. Thank ye—thank ye kindly, aunt! (fanning himself with his hat) and if this be your style of providing for your family, thank you also for disowning the relationship; but you, cousin, though you are go-

ing to be married to a man of rank, won't you take pity on your old play-fellow, Christopher, who having heard of aunt's promotion, came, in hopes of getting into high life; and who certainly will get into high life, (*pulling up his collar*) if you dont keep him from being caught, rack'd and tortured by—oh ! lord !

Ulrica. Christopher ! cousin Christopher ! and come to see his aunt, the countess ! very well, sir ; you didn't come to see Ulrica, then ?

Chris. Eh !

Ulrica. You didn't come to see her who's already caught—lock'd up—because she dont choose an unequal marriage ; and who, notwithstanding her dress and appearance, is the same simple-hearted creature you left her, sir ; but since you're alter'd, sir, since you forget your former humble—

Chris. (*half crying*) I dont—I'm as simple as ever and if I thought you were not joking—but you are—(*looking close in her face*) yes—no—(*Ulrica smiles*) she's the same kind hearted—

Ulrica. I am ;—and were we but in our native village, Christopher—

Chris. We'd send for a priest, buy a little land, make money, make love, and have such a happy fireside !

DUETT—CHRISTOPHER, ULRICA.

Chris. When a little farm we keep,
And have little girls and boys,
With little pigs and sheep,
To make a little noise—
Oh ! what happy, merry days we'll see !

Ulrica. Then we'll keep a little maid,
And a little man beside ;
And a little horse and pad,
To take a little ride,
With the children sitting on our knee.

Chris. The boys I'll conduct,

Ulrica. The girls I'll instruct;

Chris. In reading I'll engage,

Each son is not deficient;

Ulrica. In music, I presage,

Each girl is a proficient.

Chris. Now, boy, your A, B, C!

Ulrica. Now, girl, your solfa!

(*Ulrica mimics teaching a girl to sing, and Christopher a boy to read*)

Both. When a little farm we keep, &c.

Chris. Charming! delightful!

Ulrica. Very! only you forget one thing—you forget we are both lock'd up; and if aunt finds us together, it will make bad so much worse. Mercy on me! how could you get in here!

Chris. Mercy on me! how am I to get out here? and my time's up with the count!

Ulrica. What count?

Chris. Why, mother, who formerly got this ungrateful aunt made housekeeper to old count Roland, you know, has lately got me into the young count's retinue; and he is killing game in the neighboring woods, and I'm—(*noise of unlocking the door*) killed myself! oh, lord! there's only one chance—aunt can't know me—she hasn't seen me since I became a man; but, then, *you cousin!*—if I am a man! shall I, like a base, selfish—no—it mounts!—the Roland blood mounts high within me! (*noise*)

Ulrica. Hush! I rely on him they select to be my husband—his heart's elsewhere—and by securing your own escape now, you may hereafter effect mine. (*door opens*) The baron! our enraged host!—now, what's to be done now!

[*Christopher retires*

enter baron RAVENSBURG and OLIVER.

Oliver. I tell you, my lord, I'm so sure Agnes will be found innocent—but I'm silent.

Baron. Be silent, then!—and for you, madam, I came to tell you that the priest is sent for, and my son is sent for; and I sha'n't stir out of this room, till I witness the glorious union of the Rolands and the Ravensburghs!

Ulrica. (archly) Your son! your son is absent, then?

Baron. He is; but the countess has undertaken to see him brought home; and I dont know who she alludes to, but it seems she talks of catching more trouble-some people. (*here Ulrica makes signs to Christopher to be gone, and he steals towards the side door*) And so, Oliver! bring me a chair, old Oliver—(*Oliver gives him one*) for here I'll sit. (*Christopher is opening the door, when the baron hears him*) Why, what's that? (*in his agitation, Christopher turns sharply round, and faces the baron, holding the door wide open in his hand*) zounds! where do you come from?

Chris. Come! I come from—(*amazed*)

Baron. Ay, what brings you here, sir? and dont—dont stand staring there with the door open. Either (*beating his cane violently against the floor*) either come in, or go out.

Chris. Out, if you please, sir.

[exit

Baron. (*pulling him back*) Stop—this won't do—how came you in my house?

Chris. (*confused*) Came! why I came from young count Rowland, sir.

Baron. Oh, you want to see the countess, then?

Chris. Thank ye, I have seen her; and as her answer isn't at all satisfactory, I hope shortly to return, and take something much more satisfactory. (*looking significantly at Ulrica, and going—Ulrica nods in return*)

Oliver. (*coming between him and the door*) I dare say you do; but—he, he, he! the little old butler will prevent you. My lord, just now, instead of a message from count Roland, this fellow talk'd of your keeping low company. (*Christopher shakes his head to stop him*) You did! you actually hinted, that one of our

fine ladies was no better than old Winifred Winbuttle,
a housekeeper—

Baron. Dolt! blockhead! (*to Christopher*) when, except this untitled girl, there is not one plain lady, no, nor one real gentlewoman in the whole party; and she, as heiress, and sole relation of the high-born countess Roland—

Chris. The sole relation of who?

Baron. The high-born countess Roland!

Chris. (*eagerly*) What! you havn't heard—the heiress dare not even hint—oh ho! (*looking at Ulrica, who beckons him to go*) But I won't stay, else I could tell you, that if you and your son had purses as long as the dead pedigree of the Ravensburgs, they wouldn't be half long enough for the live pedigree of the high-born countess Roland! and as her relations will shortly be yours, I'll send express for some few dozens from Franconia, who'll now have two strings to their bow; for if cousin Winifred Winbuttle dont keep open house for them, ecod! cousin baron Ravensburg must. And so, yours my lord, yours madam: and there—(*whispering Oliver*) there's a Roland for your Oliver, my little twaddling old butler. [exit]

Baron. Send express for a few dozens! without there! stop that scoundrel! *Ulrica*, what is all this? speak—I insist on an explanation.

Ulrica. So do I, sir—I insist on an explanation, and I will have one, if I follow that impudent fellow to the world's end.

Baron. Stay where you are. In, in, if you please.

Ulrica. (*trying to pass him*) Out, out, if you please. (*mimicking Christopher*)

Baron. Oliver, be you her guard, whilst I pursue this false, this infamous—

Ulrica. (*getting between him and the door*) Stay.

SONG—ULRICA.

I.

Sure woman's to be pitied
Whenever she's committed,

For being fond and gay ;
And those who cry out “shame !”
Are very much to blame—
That’s all I say.

II.

I never could discover
Why listening to a lover
Throughout the live-long day,
Should be miscall’d offence,
It is not common sense—
‘That’s all I say.

III.

But though the old and haughty
Pretend tis very naughty,
They think a different way ;
For this, I know, is true,
They do as others do—
That’s all I say.

[exeunt

SCENE II—a vaulted cavern belonging to the free
knights—nearly in the centre a large brazen door,
in the archway a parapet, and occasional apertures
in the broken fragments of the rock.

enter EVERARD, hastily, through the doorway.

Ever. This, this the far-famed court so long extoll’d
for fair investigation ! poor Agnes Lindorf ! unheard
thou art condemn’d, pre-judged, thy judges will de-
cree thee guilty, and this, thy trial, is no more than
the mere mockery of justice ! but I have held converse
with the young lord Ravensburg, and if he follow an
old soldier’s counsel, there may be still some hope, that
the accused shall vanquish the accuser.

enter ZASTROW, bearing Agnes, who is senseless, in
his arms—he places her on a piece of broken rock
near the wing.

Speak, Zastrow—is she condemn'd?

Zast. No—charge following charge, her boasted firmness forsook her; and fainting, as supposed, from conscious guilt, she was dismiss'd: but soon her sentence will be known, and all foresee the vengeance that awaits the count Manfredi's daughter.

Ever. Manfredi's daughter!

Zast. Ay, that Italian traitor, who, on the Danube's banks destroyed the treasure he was bound to guard, and she, (*turning towards Agnes*) imbibing the same kindred hate for those whom loyalty should make her love, late at the banquet of the baron Ravensburg, infused a poisonous mixture in the draught of our loved prince: but he, detecting her intent, the death, thank heaven, she design'd for him, will soon recoil upon herself.

Ever. And he, the prince, is her accuser! mark you that?

Zast. I do.

Ever. Then mark, (*pointing to Agnes*) is that the countenance of guilt?

Zast. How, Everard! when even Ravensburg, her benefactor's son, now loudly in the open court took part against her. (*Everard shows emotion*) He did;—and thereby so increased the prince's admiration—look! he's here!

enter RAVENSBURG, hastily, in the dress of a free knight, with a paper in his hand, followed by two free knights.

Ravens. Where is the traitress? where the daughter of Manfredi?

Agnes. (*starting up*) That voice! still, still does it pursue me? my lord! (*in a petitioning manner*)

Ravens. Stand off!

Agnes. This! this from Ravensburg! (*bursts into tears*)

Ravens. Tis past—it is pronounced! read—read that awful warrant.

Agnes. (*taking it, but not looking at it*) Tis past indeed! but e'er I meet my death, I swear by him who shall for ever live, that I would rather be the culprit thus condemn'd, than those who have condemn'd me: for they, not I, must answer for a life unjustly sacrificed! and when deprived of utterance and of sense, think not twas consciousness of guilt o'ercame me! no, twas to hear myself accused by him, who, still persisting in his cruelty.—Why—wherefore should I live? since he, since he is lost! I am most thankful for this final—(*casting her eyes on the warrant*) Heavens! how! (*reading it apart*) “Perceiving you were prejudged, I opposed, to save you. The free knight who conducts you to the solitary cell, from which tis meant that you should ne'er return, knows of a secret passage. Confide in him, and your devoted Ravensburg.”

Ravens. (*fiercely*) Well! have you read?—

Agnes. (*with stifled feeling*) I have, and I repeat, I am most thankful, sir.

Ravens. (*to Everard*) Conduct her to her cell—you know the rest—away, and quick return; for as his highness passes from the court, he must be told the traitress is secured.

Ever. He shall, my lord.

Ravens. Away! (*Agnes is about to thank Ravensburg, by kneeling to him, when by action he recalls her recollection*) Away! (*Everard and Agnes exunt—Zastrow and other knights are following—Ravensburg stops them*) Let none follow; he is alone sufficient to secure a willing victim.

Zast. (*observing*) Ha!

enter PRINCE and train, through the doorway.

Prince. (*looking earnestly around*) How! gone! tis well! for she recalls such dreadful scenes, that, coward-like, I sicken at her sight.—But whither gone? who was her guard?

Ravens. A loyal and a chosen knight ; they know him well, and saw him lead her to her cell.

Zast. We did, my liege ; but tis my duty to impart, as one of equal loyalty and honor—

Ravens. (*hastily interrupting him*) Peace ! he returns !

EVERARD re-enters.

Prince. (*to Everard*) Now, to your office, sir ! speak, is the traitress safe ?

Ever. Quite, quite safe, my liege. (*looking at Ravensburg, who shows joy, aside*)

Zast. (*aside to the prince*) My liege, you are deceived. Mark'd you their dark mysterious looks ?

Prince. How ! more conspiracy ? can none, not e'en free knights be trusted ? and I, who would avoid the hated sight—must I, myself—well, tis but one desperate effort more. Come, follow.

(*music—Agnes is seen escaping through the apertures—she makes signs to Ravensburg, who, unseen by the prince and train, returns them—Everard partakes in their joy—the prince commands all to march*)

[*exeunt*

SCENE III—a wood.

enter FALCONERS, severally.

1st falc. Where is my lord ? where is count Roland ?

2d falc. Giving his orders for to-morrow's journey.

1st falc. What, our departure then is fix'd ?

2d falc. It is : to-morrow we set off for Corbey, there to sojourn awhile with my lord's friend, marquis Alberti.

enter count ROLAND, followed by two FALCONERS.

Count. Come, brother falconers, break up our rural camp, give the hawks wing, and let another day of pure exhilarating pastime crown those we have enjoyed.

SONG—COUNT ROLAND.

I.

When the morning shines forth, and the zephyrs calm
gale

Carries fragrance and health over mountain and dale,
Follow me, brother falconers, and share in those joys,
Which envy disturbs not, nor grandeur destroys :
Up hill, down the valley, all dangers we'll dare,
While our coursers spurn earth, and our hawks sail in air.

Dash on, my brave birds,
Your quarry pursue ;
“ Strike. strike !” be the words.
Lalleugh ! lalleugh !

II.

O'er plain, heath, and woodland, with rapture we roam,
Yet, returning, still find the dear pleasure at home ;
Where inspiring good humor gives honesty grace,
And the heart speaks content in the smiles of the face.

Dash on, &c.

Count. To-day concludes our sylvan holiday. (*going*)
Why, who comes here? as I live, my merry falconer,
Christopher! and I'm impatient to be told the issue of
his curious enterprize. Ha, ha, ha! to know if he's
related to the house of Roland—

enter CHRISTOPHER.

Well, Christopher, am I to call you cousin?

Chris. You are, my lord; and with your leave I
sha'n't copy our aunt the countess's example, and not
notice those beneath us. No. How d'ye do, my fine
fellows—how d'ye do? (*bowing foppishly to the fal-
coners*)

Count. Aunt!—ridiculous! my uncle had no wife.
I've heard, indeed, he had a consequential housekeep-
er, whose niece, Ulrica, I once saw.

Chris. What, you've seen Ulrica? so have I, my

lord : and though its bold work, life's so short, and love's so fidgetty, mayn't I——mayn't I see her again, my lord ?

Count. What, you'd return ? (*Christopher nods assent*) Then go—go, and announce to marquis Alberti, that I shall visit him to-night. Mind, to-night ! I will hear more of this new aunt of mine.

Chris. (with great glee) To-night, my lord ? and you, and you——(*to the falconers*)

Count. And all. And therefore, till we meet at Corbey abbey, adieu, most noble cousin Christopher !

1st & 2d falc. (bowing with ironical respect) Adieu, most noble nephew of the countess Roland !

Chris. Noble indeed ! and give me money, and a wife, see if I dont support nobility—I'll give such splendid entertainments——

Count. What, and like town-bred, ostentatious nobles ; only to splendid company ?

Chris. Certainly not, my lord ; for your splendid company seldom invite again ; and therefore I'll stick more to the trading line, where tis not giving dinners, but lending them, to be repaid at high bill of fare interest ; and so, till we meet at Corbey, adieu, most noble cousin !

[exit]

Count. Now for our sport, which ends not in the field.

GLEE,

I.

When Phœbus' rays no more appear,
And falconers further sport decline ;
When ploughmen from their fields repair,
And mournful night-birds rend the air,

Then give me wine :
And at home the chase shall reign,
For in wine it lives again.

II.

When loud the chilling tempest blows,
And winter makes all nature pine ;

When lowing herds, and rooks and crows
 Do droop and moan at frost and snows,
 Then give me wine, &c.

[exeunt]

SCENE IV—the garden of Corbey abbey, with gates, over which is a projecting tablet, with an inscription nearly effaced—in the back, an ascending avenue through pine trees—in the centre a statue of Charlemagne—on the base of which is written, “Charlemagne grants the power of sanctuary and of pardon to the abbots of Corbey for ever.”

enter BERNARDO and ST. CLAIR from the abbey.

St. Clair. Nay, brother, you're to blame. The church, the court, all Germany, applaud the proud election of the monk Bellarmin; for Corbey abbey was too long disgraced by our late worldly abbot's vices.

Bern. And our new abbot will retrieve its fame. The monk Bellarmin has no worldly vice. Speak, for I know him not.

St. Clair. Not know Bellarmin!

Bern. I know some fourteen years are past, since, in the dead of night, a stranger, faint with terror and distress, implored assistance at our abbey gate, and, in return for our protecting care, since join'd our order. I know, besides, that stranger is Bellarmin. But for the rest, what means that pallid cheek, the hollow eye, and those stern gloomy looks, repelling sympathy, creating strong disgust—

St. Clair. Peace, peace, Bernardo!—he may have suffered wrongs, but never has committed them; and firm in conscious dignity and honor, Bellarmin may have spirit to revive what former abbots, truckling to authority; what servile priesthood, dreading lordly power, so long has suffer'd to lie dormant—the edict of our mighty founder, the edict of immortal Charlemagne! (pointing to the tablet)

Bern. He, our new abbot! he restore our abbey's

ancient and peculiar charter ! (*pointing to the tablet*) st. Clair, he dare not, for guilt and courage ne'er had joint abode.

St. Clair. Guilt !

Berz. Ay ; why, ever, else, on naming the return of our brave warriors from the Holy land, does he betray such latent anger ? and, when, last night, twas thought their presence would increase the glory of his installation why such avowed and rancorous opposition ? he bears about him hidden discontent, and I will fathom to the lowest depth this most mysterious being ! mark ! he comes ! observe ! observe ! (*they retire up the stage*)

enter ABBOT, through the avenue.

Abbot. Oh thou ! who knowest my undivulged thoughts ! who knowest how long and fervently I've prayed to root from memory all suffering past, and dwell with gratitude on present blessings, let me but practise what I daily preach, thy brightest attribute forgiveness, and wrunged Bellarmin shall convince the world, that though their censure stung him to the heart, he feels their kindness with redoubled warmth ! he does ! the knawing viper is, at last, extinct ! and this auspicious day is herald of his future calm repose !

St. Clair. Now, now, Bernardo, where's the discontent? (*advancing towards the abbot*) My lord, well met ! and whilst all bless the hour the emperor ratified our choice, we much rejoice your honors cease not with your late election. To day installs you in your envied seat ; to morrow shall behold you still more graced ; for the free knights shall then elect you to the highest rank in their exalted council !

Bern. Aye ; in that sacred council which our holy brotherhood so reverence, and so dread.

Abbot. Tis well—tis well. Thus chosen abbot of your own free will, not by my seeking, as ye all can witness ; for this, and greater favors past, I'm bound for ever to obey, and serve ye ! to day, I'll welcome these, our sacred rites ; to morrow, far more awful

ceremony ! I will descend to the mysterious knights, and prove to those, who vest me with authority, no selfish passion lurks within my breast ! tis past ! it is subdued ! and whilst life lasts, I will devote that life to ever crushing my own narrowed wishes, and courting the superior joy of aiding and promoting general welfare.

Voice. (without) Help ! for mercy ! help !

Abbot. The voice of one distressed ! unbar the gates —give them free entrance.

[*st. Clair opens the gate Agnes rushes in*]

Agnes. (falling at the abbot's feet) Protect me ! save me ! I'm pursued, o'ertaken !

Bern. (sullenly) Pursued !

Agnes. No—not pursued—I scarce know what I utter—my friend, my kind protecting friend ! who was conducting me through yonder forest, compelled to leave me by strong urgent circumstance, bade me seek shelter in this holy pile, till one he named could hasten to my relief—and you'll consent ! you pious men must feel, that virtue never seems more lovely, than when her arm is stretched to raise the helpless and unfortunate.

Abbot. (raising her) Rise ; and, till your friend arrive, confide in one, who trained in dire misfortune's school, can keenly feel for others.

Bern. My lord, reflect. She owned she was pursued, and, in these perilous, these disastrous times, shall strangers be thus welcomed ? I would hear further.

Abbot. What further would you hear ? sorrow, in any shape, should meet with pity ; but when it supplicates in female form, we dry its tears, nor wait to ask what caused them ! unknown ! unquestioned, I found welcome here, and none yet know the story of my wrongs ; why, therefore, pry into her hidden grief ? tis harsh, it is unmanly ! come.

(*trumpet sounds without*)

Bern. Now, who was harsh in forewarning ? know

ye that awful sound? know ye the free knights' summons? (goes to the abbey gate) Come forth, and vindicate the cause of those who justify the christian faith. (monks enter from the abbey) Lo! the accused!

(pointing to Agnes)

Agnes. (to abbey) Do not desert me! on my soul I'm innocent.

Abbot. (who has turned from her) Away! you have profaned our hallowed ground! and thus, pursued by those, whose mandates all submissive sanction, I am no more your friend. Begone!

Agnes. (clinging to him) Is mine the age for plotting death by subtle poison? is mine the sex for treason and conspiracy? and if I am the daughter of the count Manfredi, am I to answer for my wretched father's crimes?

Abbot. Manfredi's daughter!

(turning towards her with emotion)

Bern. (opening the garden gate) Behold! read there! (pointing to the banner and reading) "condemned traitress! agnes Manfredi appear!"

Abbot. Manfredi had no daughter! speak, e'er my brain burst! his name the name of your accuser?

Agnes. I dread to utter it, for all approve what the prince Palatine affirms.

Abbot. (apart) I thought it was subdued—I said the gnawing viper was extinct; but since it cross my path again, may the fulfillment of this new atrocious act be most important to his purpose! for let the vassal world bow down to his imperious will, alone, I'll blast the deadly scorpion's wiles, and snatch one victim from his fiend-like fury! Manfredi's daughter! false! false as your accuser's heart! and knowing that, tis joy! tis transport to protect you!

(taking Agnes' hand)

St. Clair. Horror! protect her!

Bern. All gracious powers! thus in defiance of our sacred Champions!

Abbot. Hear me! if the tribunal be composed of

high, unblemished, and enlightened minds, who meet to render free impartial justice, however ungracious be their forms, those forms twere idle to oppose ; but if they thus condemn—if private malice beat down public good—if made a vehicle to gratify tyrannic power, they prove a midnight sanguinary band ; I, sacred champion of the christian cause, will give a bright example of its justice, by baffling those who prostitute its name.

Bern. This is Bellarmin ! this the pious monk ! who boasted of promoting general welfare, and now commences his career by plunging us in ruin. But shall we patiently submit to be involved in his most impious rashness ? or shall we instantly dismiss the culprit ? and, as we ought, give the free knights the quickest means of vengeance ?

St. Clair. For this ingratitude, all join Bernardo.

Bern. (*seeing that all take part with him*) All !

Abbot. Hold ! I implore ye' my motives known, no censure will await me ! but, till they are, confide in one who, if before he felt unceasing gratitude for all your kindness, what must he now ? when, like yourselves, he can exalt his abbey's fame, by once more sheltering in its holy walls, a wrong'd, unhappy, persecuted being !

Agnes. (*appealing to the monks*) Unhappy ! most unhappy !

Bern. In vain—in vain ; for every where the free knights see—and seeing, every where approach, and oft by such mysterious paths, that magic like, they flash on the pursued—hark ! behold ! (*a party of free knights are seen descending the avenue of pine trees*) Guard well the gate ! for all who seek not to secure the culprit, partake the crime, and share in the destruction.

(*Zastrow advancing, his vizor half up ; the other knights remaining behind the trees*)

Zast. Behold ! the traitress !

Abbot. (*coming between Zastrow and Agnes*) On

one false charge condemned, I trust, I'm confident of all she's innocent. (*Zastrow still advancing*) Nay, ye, who boast yourselves avenging knights, recall those chivalrous heroic times, when knight hoods lance avenged a better cause, and flew to guard, and not to destroy, such helplessness! reflect, beside, that love for what's divine (*pointing to heaven*) inspires the soul with love for what is human! and whilst religion, with the brightning sun, shines forth to gladden and improve, dark superstition, like the cankering blight, infects and withers every social hope! you pass not further—on my life you pass not!

Zast. Advance! (*free nights rush forward, and seize Agnes*) and as ye are commanded (*pointing to the banner*) strike!

Abbot. And as ye are commanded (*pointing to the Inscription on the statue of Charlemange*) spare! you know my power! (*to the monks*) you know the edict of our mighty founder, victorious Charlemagne! who, in return for laurels won upon this spot, first raised our abbey, to commemorate conquest; and soon endowing it with right of sanctuary, next gave the abbot the more blest prerogative of granting pardon, where he saw just cause! I see it now! I claim my abbey's privilege! I stand upon my founder's Edict! and kings! laws! armies! must support the man, who struggling for a sacred right, asserts mankind's and heaven's inspiring cause! (*the free knights unloose their hold of Agnes, who crosses to the abbot; and the monks, by their manner, evince conviction*) No more I sue for your support—(*to the monks*)—now I command it! and ye, fam'd foes to sacrilegious outrage! (*to the free knights*) proclaim that this, my post, assigned to me by providence, I will maintain, or perish in the conflict! lead to the sanctuary—away!

(music—*Agnes thanks the abbot, who cheers and encourages her—free knights ascend the avenue, and disappear—monks exeunt into the abbey, abbot following with Agnes*)

A C T III.

SCENE I—view of corbey abbey, open country, and chateau.

enter countess ROLAND and attendants.

Countess. How fortunate! how very fortunate! whilst I was in pursuit of that low wretch, called Christopher, I called in at the marquis Alberti's, and heard the welcome news, that my nephew count Roland, and his falconers were almost instantly expected! charming! delightful! though I didn't see him when he visited Roland castle—though this will be our first, I trust it won't be our last meeting; for, in my mind, his real motive is not to see the good old marquis, but a young fair one, called Ulrica. Oh! if it proves as I suspect, I'll match these hesitating Ravensburgs!

[going into chateau

OLIVER enters from it.

Oliver. Oh, madam, I'm so glad you're come, for what with the prince, and the baron being absent, and my poor Agnes not yet returned, and the poor lock'd up lady Ulrica yonder (*pointing to a window in the chateau*) sighing for her cousin Christopher! I was just saying, any body's company would be better than nobody's.

Countess. Cousin Christopher, the unknown imposter I'm in search of. And after I have so convinced the baron!

Oliver. I know—I know you have convinced the baron, that you've no poor franconia relations; but I do say, as the lady Ulrica has no objection, I wish this Christopher were her husband. (*countess frowns*) I do; for in that case, she not being able to marry my young master, and my young master being able to marry Agnes, I should see what I hav'n't seen since I lost my sweet Seraphina! a real happy handsome couple.

Countess. Show me in, sir ; and instead of chattering about my pretended nephew Christopher, talk of my real nephew, count Rowland ! who, though to me a stranger, is none to the lady Ulrica, as you call her ! (*horns without*) hark ! he comes ! count Roland comes ! and, as I thought—see ! towards Ulrica's residence ! to sigh and moan under his true-love's window ! now for it. I'll just step in, and give further orders for pursuing this sham nephew, Christopher ; and then, if I dont match old baron Ravensburg, and his capricious son, say I'm no match-maker.

[*exit into chateau, preceded by Oliver*

enter count ROLAND and 1st. FALCONER.

Count. Behold the beauties of this far fam'd spot, and foremost to delight the traveller's eye, yon venerable abbey ! founded by him whose laurels shall for ever bloom.

1st Falc. And see, my lord, yonder is the marquis Alberti's chateau.

Count. Happy Alberti ! who having brav'd the perils of the ocean, now finds a haven in his faithful Ella's love. Oh ! I shall ne'er forget the day they parted, nor that tempestuous night, when many a ship-wreck'd mariner was lost.

SONG—COUNT.

1.

Says Ella to her love, “ remember,

“ Though doom'd to part, you constant view

“ That moon, which rises in such splendor ;

“ I too, will look; and think of you.

“ Anxious Ella shall not sleep

“ Whilst her sailor braves the deep.

2.

But tempestuous is the weather,

And lovely Ella's wish is crost,

Vain her watching nights together,
Successive moons in clouds are lost.
Stormy winds the forests sweep,
Whilst her sailor braves the deep.

3.

Swift to the shore she flies, complaining ;
The tempest to her prayer is deaf ;
When lo ! that orb she's so arraigning,
Shines forth, and shows her lover safe.
Now no more shall Ella weep,
For her sailor's brav'd the deep.

enter all the FALCONERS.

Count. Now for my friend Alberti's, and there
learn more of this same countess Roland.

enter CHRISTOPHER.

Chris. My lord, I have announced your coming, and the marquis is all impatience. But what do you think ? when I sent up your lordship's message, who shou Id be of the party but my aunt, the countess ? and one of the marquis's retinue wanted me to take courage, and go up to her— “ for ” says he, “ if she hasn't seen you since you were a boy, and she took up your cousin, Ulrica, on account of her uncommon beauty, who knows, if she once saw you—— ” You understand, my lord—I'm certainly improved. (*pulling up his collar.*)~

Count. Improved ! so much, that at first sight, my life on't, you'll charm the countess.

Chris. His words ! his very words ! and I certainly charmed Ulrica ! but then—psha ! ridiculous !—you all flatter !—and aunt's there !—(*pointing to the Chateau.*) And Ulrica's there ! and to night makes her wife to that old pedigree—(*Here the countess appears at the door of the Chateau unobserved, looks out, and listens.*) So go all of ye—go to the marquis Al-

berti's, and leave me to sob and sigh—oh, sweet Ulrica !—oh ! h ! ha !

Count. Well, as it suits—and so good night, most noble love-sick swain.

Falc. Good night, most noble nephew of the countess Rowland.

[*Bowing as before, and with count exunt falconers—Christopher with his back to the countess, bows in return—she advances from chateau all joy and triumph, and exultingly goes towards him.*]

Countess (*Aside and unseen by Christopher.*) So, most noble nephew of the countess Roland !

Chris Oh, sweet Ulrica ! oh, most savage—(*turns towards countess.*) Mercy ! do I see right ?

Countess. You see your aunt, the countess Rowland, who regrets extremely she didn't see you on your last visit—but you saw Ulrica ; and if, as I presume, you come once more to see her—(*Christopher more and more frightened*)—you do ; your looks, your fears, your agitation proves it ; and to end at once yours, hers, and my anxiety—Ulrica !

Chris. Dont—dont alarm the family ! upon my hon. (appealing)

Countess. When I selected the son of baron Ravensburg, I hadn't the honor of knowing my charming nephew. (*curtseying very low, Christopher staring, and beginning to brighten up*) But now I do know him ! lest the baron should return and spoil the present glorious opportunity—Ulrica ! (*Ulrica appears at the window*) Look—who's here—and, at first sight, he has so won my favor ; and so excells these paltry Ravensburgs, that, if you choose to be released, and instantly receive my dear loved nephew's suit—

Ulrica. I'll try, aunt.

Countess. And you ! (*to Christopher*)

Chris I'll try, aunt.

Countess. (*hastily going to the door of the chateau*) Oliver ! the priest has long been waiting. (*to Christopher*)

Chris. (going to the door and calling loudly) Oliver! (enter OLIVER.) Show in the nephew of the countess Rowland. (Oliver shows astonishment, and looks at countess, who nods assent) You see!—conduct me to my loved betrothed Ulrica. (countess nods assent, and gives Christopher the key of Ulrica's apartment) You see!—lead on, my little twaddling old butler. Lol de rol, lol lol! (exit, kissing his hand to countess and Ulrica, and making Oliver go in before him)

Countess. There! there's match-making, and here—

enter BARON RAVENSBURG and attendants.

So, sir—have you found your runaway son?

Baron. I have, countess—I've traced him to Corby abbey, and he's so closely pursued, that I shall soon employ the priest now, and make amends for my low suspicions about that rascally imposter! that fellow, with his franconian express! I know, except your niece—

Countess. (haughtily) I have a nephew, sir, a nephew now in the chateau, whose name you may have heard. Count Roland, sir.

Baron. In my—in my chateau! I've seen—I know count Rowland—and such a guest I so rejoice to welcome. (going hastily towards the door; Oliver re-enters meeting him)

Oliver. And I rejoice! and my lady, my young master, and Agnes may rejoice! for the priest, quite worn out with waiting for one couple, is now marrying another—is marrying the lady Ulrica to your nephew! he, he, he!

Baron. (to countess) Marrying Ulrica to your nephew!

Countess. To my nephew, sir—to a man as far above the Ravensburgs in rank, as in accomplishments!

Ulrica. throwing open the window) Aunt! we're married, aunt!

Countess. Transporting sight! there! (to baron) Married to her cousin, great count Rowland!

Chris. (putting his head out of window) No ! to me ! to cousin Christopher ! who said, all along, that aunt would be as kind to poor, as rich, relations ! and who, on the baron's giving him his choice, this morning walked out of the chateau ; but, now, having sent the promised express, and expecting all his franconia cousins, says, "in," till the honeymoon's over ! (shutting the window immediately, and he and Ulrica disappear)

Baron. There he is again ! there's the nephew of the countess Rowland !

Countess. Tis false ! and I'll be instantly revenged !

Baron. And so will I ! (as they are going into the chateau)

QUINTETTO.

Baron. Rage inspires me.

Countess. Madness fires me.

Both. I'll the slave to pieces tear !

enter OLIVER from the house.

Oliver. Sorrow banish,

Anger vanish,

Come and bless the wedded pair !

Countess. Plague,

Baron. Confound,

Both. The wedded pair !

enter ULRICA from the house.

Ulrica. As late I traversed yonder plain,
I heard a pilgrim, worn with pain,

A traveller thus addressing :

' What can't be cured

' Must be endured,

' But pray, kind friend, your blessing !'

Christopher } ' What can't be cured

at the window. } ' Must be endured,

} ' But pray, kind friend, your blessing !'

Ulrica.

You hear ; (to baron) and you (to countess)

Baron. } We do! we do!
Countess. }

Ulrica. And you agree! (*coaxing them*)
 I see—I see!

We've liberty!

All. Love, true love, is crown'd with glory!
 Viva—viva con amore! [exeunt

SCENE II—the interior of the abbey.

enter the ABBOT and AGNES.

Abbot. An unknown orphan, named Agnes Lindorf, by him, your benefactor!

Agnes. By baron Ravensburg, whose son has so befriended me. But I detain you from most urgent duty. The great, the good, all, all advance to grace your installation.

Abbot. They do. But he, this baron, you suspect, may know the motive for your accusation? (*Agnes accords*) oh that I knew! for I would court each, the most trifling circumstance, still further to destroy your fell accuser's hopes. Well, well, they are destroy'd! long ere this dark tribunal had a name, ages had sanction'd our monastic rights. And let but your protecting friend arrive, you may pass free from this devoted land, to one where unmasked justice sits in open day, and prince and peasant meet with equal hearing.

Agnes. We may, we may—and live to recompense thy matchless kindness. But still these awful, these enraged avengers! why, why does he delay?

enter ST. CLAIR.

St. Clair. My lord, a stranger!

Agnes. (*looking out*) Tis he! tis Ravensburg!

[exit St. Clair.]

enter RAVENSBURG.

Welcome! oh welcome! behold the man (*pointing to the abbot*) who scorning prejudiced, corrupt, compli-

ance—(*Ravensburg turns away, and hides his face*)
Ha ! that look ! those tears !

Ravens. For thee they fall, and for thy more than father ! I've watch'd, I've hasten'd from my fell associates—(*abbot starts*) ay, I, by oath, am sworn to be the deadly foe of Agnes, and of all who give her aid. But when I know that she deserves that aid, and that this boasted institution's power is made subservient to such lawless crime, as ancient record of tyrannic guilt can give no proof of, I trust that he, who boldly shall retract such oath, is deem'd less guilty in the eye of heaven, than he who cowardly fulfills it. This for myself—for you, who, singly, have opposed this hydra of rapacious power, and in a glorious cause, claim'd the just right of sanctuary and of pardon—how will you meet the tensold horrors that will soon burst forth on all within these walls !

Agnes. On all ?

Abbot. They cannot—dare not !

Ravens. They dare ! for her escape discover'd, they sent forth sanguinary knights, who soon return'd, and in full council stated, that one, most nobly acting on his founder's edict, defied their power, and pardon'd the condemn'd ! all murmur'd, and all menaced ! till I, declaiming on the glaring outrage of those, who call'd themselves a sacred band, disputing sacred rights, had gain'd some proselytes, when the prince Palatine appear'd, and like the torrent from the mountain's brow, assail'd each obstacle, and swept down all before him !

Abbot. (*after a struggle*) Well ! the result ?

Ravens. Most savage, most inevitable ! for while in force they come to claim their victim, you, and the brotherhood, are all proscribed for treason and for sacrilege !

Agnes. And this ! this havock is my causing ! mine ! a poor orphan ! whose death no kindred will deplore, whilst the whole world will mourn my kind defender's loss ! my lord, tis past ! loved friend, farewell ! and if

one victim will appease their rage, I'll hail the sacrifice, and die contented. (*going*)

Abbot. (*stopping her*) Die first this hated despot ! who, ever, fiend-like, strikes his envious fangs where heaven most loves, and man's most bound to guard ! I pardon ! I give sanctuary ! and whilst one spark of ebbing life glows here, whilst one small fragment of these walls remain, that fragment may be stain'd with dire assassin's blood ! but a poor orphan, who, I know, is innocent, shall live to soar and triumph o'er her foes ! let them advance ! ourselves, our abbey, can support some contest, and yon bright power ! that watches o'er the virtuous, will combat in our cause!—(*drums and trumpets heard at a short distance*) hark ! they come !

Agnes. They do ! they do ! and see ! the prince, in person, leads the furious band ! look there ! behold !

(*Ravensburg looks out—abbot turns away*)

Abbot. Not, not for worlds, lest, maddening at the sight, I lose all memory of holy function, and rush to strike the murderer of my peace dead in his army's presence ! villain ! barbarian ! (*weeps aside*) oh ! the day has been, when these, fair nature's brightest gems, hung on my cheek as emblems of pure sympathy ! but now, like drops of fire, they serve to light the brand of discord and revenge !—come—to the sanctuary !

Ravens. Unequalled man ! fit guardian of such rights—speak ! can my arm—

Abbot. (*taking him aside*) Your father—mark—your father may have heard why she is called Manfredi's daughter. I would know this, and all that you can learn. Now, whilst there's hope, away—and this (*giving him a key*) secures your private entrance through the western gate upon the river's edge,

Ravens. I'll seek my father, ascertain each fact, and, fear not, Agnes ! the pangs of parting will be paid at meeting !

Abbot. Twill do ! twill prosper ! and my great founder's edict thus revived—should they persist in

prostituting justices' name, I will throw wide my abbey gates, and pardoning all they dare proscribe, make it a bulwark 'gainst the common foe ! come—away !

[*exeunt*

SCENE III—*a road near Corbey.*

enter CHRISTOPHER.

Chris. So, this is the place of meeting—from hence we were to start for Franconia—and not here ! Ulrica not yet come ! mighty well ! our marriage but an hour old, and keep her husband waiting !

enter ULRICA.

So, you begin, madam—you torment already.

Ulrica. Why, if I do torment, Christopher, it's only to please you the more—it is, upon my honor.

Chris. Please by tormenting ! how, madam ?

Ulrica. Aye—ask the god of love, if it isn't—

Chris. Yes ; but where am I to find him ?

Ulrica. True—where is love to be found ?

SONG—ULRICA.

1.

Where does the urchin love abide ?

Whence does he point his dart ?

Say, does he with the dove reside ?

Or dwells he in the heart ?

2.

No fixed abode the traitor knows—

On sportive wing he flies ?

Awhile he dallies with the rose,

Then smiles in lovers' eyes.

Chris. He does—in mine ; and now I'll tell you—tis all out, and I've within me the true, real Roland blood. It seems, the strange old count had privately made aunt his wife ; but his estate descending with his title, she thought she might support her rank, by getting for her neice a famous husband—and she has got one, hasn't she, Ulrica ?

Ulrica. She has—but, seriously, think not that I stay'd from idle motives. Poor Agnes has found shelter in Corbey Abbey : but the prince, and the avenging knights, march in full force to batter down its walls.

Chris. Indeed !

Ulrica. Now—now I heard it from the noble Ravensburg, who seeks his father to hear the whole of Agnes' hapless story. And my aunt's influence no more prevailing, perhaps the baron will relent—at least, I hope so.

Chris. So do I—and we won't stir.

Ulrica. No—not while one glimmering hope remains of Agnes' safety, and her foes' defeat.

Chris. No, that we won't—but go, and plead in her behalf. (*kissing Ulrica's hand*)

Ulrica That I will ; and doubt not, Christopher—heaven still will guard the unprotected orphan ! [exit

Chris. Never—never was couple so match'd ! so much alike in all that's amiable and lovely ! oh, when we arrive in Franconia ! I know one of our neighbors, who will be all envy—baron Donderdronkwickdorff ; for, though his wife treats him with the most sovereign contempt, he is still obliged to look up to her.

SONG—CHRISTOPHER.

1.

Baron Donderdronkwickdorff said, one summer's day,
“ Though wedlock's a word that revolts,
“ Whatever our folks in Westphalia may say,
“ I've a great mind to marry miss Quoltz.

" For of all the dear angels that live near the Weser,
 " Miss Quoltz is the stoutest and tallest ;
 " Though of all german barons ambitious to please her,
 " I know I'm the shortest and smallest."
 How I should like the marriage waltz
 To dance with thee, my lovely Quoltz !

2.

Poor Donderdroneckdickdorff, with amorous phiz,
 On tiptoe imparted his flame.
 " Ah ! baron !" she sighed, " what a pity it is,
 " You are not half so long as your name !"
 " If names," said the baron, ' were smaller, or bigger,
 " To suit ev'ry size at a pinch,
 " Your name, dear miss Quoltz, to keep up to your
 figure,
 " Wou'd measure six foot and an inch "
 How I should like, &c.

3.

The wedding day fix'd, both the parties agreed,
 That the peasants should dance german waltzes,
 And drink to the future mix'd long and short breed
 Of the Donderdroneckdickdorffs and Quoltzes
 To the church, then, on foot, went the ace with his
 size—
 " What's this crowd for ?" cries one of the people.
 " For a baron, who's taking," an arch wag replies,
 " A morning's walk under the steeple."
 How I should like, &c.

4.

Before supper, one night, ere the honey moon fled.
 They so quarrell'd, some wives would have struck
 him ;
 But the baroness took up the lord of her bed,
 And over the chimney-piece stuck him.

As the servant came in, said the baron, "you clown,
" Not a word when the guests come to sup :
" I have only been giving my wife a set down,
" And she giving me a set-up."
How I should like, &c.

[exit]

SCENE IV—*the grand aisle of the abbey, in the upper part of the sanctuary.*

enter BERNARDO, ST. CLAIR, and two other monks.
(flourish of drums and trumpets without)

Bern. You hear ! soon the victorious foe will force our walls ; for, can they long sustain the shock of such an host ? or if they could—for what ? for whom ? are we agreed ?

St. Clair. We are : in a just cause we would uphold our abbot's rights ; but when such judges have pronounced her traitress, and such brave warriors will support that judgment, shall we, upon the word of one, who will adduce no proof of innocence—we, the calm advocates of peace, not war—shall we devote our abbey and ourselves to ruin most inevitable ?

Bern. No, haughty prelate ! we will teach you now, that those who raised you to your splendid height, have still the power to humble and to crush you. And they who this night come to grace your installation, shall view their idol's downfall. Unbar the gates ! (the abbot appears in the aisle, unseen by the monks) give the prince Palatine free entrance ; and let the vengeance of the secret knights fall, as it ought, on those who have provoked it.

Abbot. (advancing hastily from the aisle) Who's he dare utter such profane commands ?

Bern. Bellarmin ! I ! unbar the gates !

Abbot. Forbear ! and think not, brothers, that I court this contest, or willingly involve ye in hard office. But we, who, vested with bright mercy's power, can

feel the bliss of sparing the unfortunate ; shall we, when barbarism, mask'd by pious, plausible pretext, strikes at the growth of every liberal feeling ; shall we forego our edict, or uphold it ? I say, uphold it ! and chiefly on one proof—Manfredi had no daughter ! that charge I know to be most groundless.

Bern. You knew Manfredi then ! (*abbot shows agitation*) he, our new oracle, proclaims he was no stranger to this murderer,

Abbot. (*with suppressed indignation*) Murderer !

Bern. The worst of murderers ! false to the man who raised him from low fortune—false to his patron, the brave prince Palatine !

Abbot. To him !

Bern. To him ! who, on his brother's, the late prince's death, anxious to see and guard that brother's child, then some leagues distant from the court, despatch'd Manfredi, as his trustiest friend, to be the princess' escort ; when, on the way, most artfully dismissing all her train, and moved not by the smile of infant innocence, mixing ingratitude with traitorous cruelty, this foe to virtue, but Bellarmin's friend, plunged his fell poinard in Theresa's heart, and fled, and died the victim of despair.

Abbot. Wert thou a winged messenger from heaven, my father's spirit, nay, e'en fate itself ! I'd tell you vile detractor, it is false ! false as thy friend, the brave prince Palatine ! who fired by daring and ambitious views, besought Manfredi to remove the bar twixt him and sovereignty. Manfredi yielded to protect his charge, and artfully dismissed the princess' train, to bear her to a friendly foreign court ; when galling, dire reverse ! in a dark covert on the Danube's banks, outlaws effected what her foes desired—Theresa fell ! (*speaking rapidly*) a prey to grief and disappointed hope, Manfredi fled—yon fell usurper gained the wish'd-for seat !

Bern. Usurper !

Abbot. Fiend ! coward ! traitor ! who, to destroy

Manfredi's evidence, sought his destruction ;—who, by false statement and concurring circumstances, secured his triumph—who still comes forth to immolate more innocence ! and Corbey's Abbot is to share in the new sacrifice ! no, though our order teaches resignation —yet teaching fortitude and love of virtue, my founder's spirit shall inspire my soul, and once more Charlemagne shall vanquish here !

Bern. Audacious, impious slanderer ! compare ennobled and established worth with such confirm'd disgrace !—(*flourish of drums and trumpets, and noise of walls falling*) they force the outworks ! instant aid their entrance ! and hail the downfal of such perjured arrogance !

St. Clair. Come !

Abbot. (*getting between them and the gates*) St. Clair ! Bernardo ! who once call'd me friend ! and who, on sudden impulse, have drawn forth what I so long and anxiously kept secret, will you desert me at this awful moment ? or, to the last contending for our abbey's rights, implore these warriors from the Holy land, not to take arms against a sacred cause ! she's wrong'd, she's innocent.

Bern. Tis false—most false !

enter RAVENSBURG.

Ravens. My lord, all's lost ! the savage and inveterate foe have storm'd the walls, and rush to glut their vengeance.

Abbot. (*to Ravensburg apart*) And from your father ! none—no hope ?

Ravens. None ! he merely states, that dreading he might lose her, who'd supply a daughter's loss ; and fearing to increase an orphan's grief, he cautiously concealed, how, one autumnal night some fourteen years ago, he saw upon the Danube's banks, an infant seemingly expiring. He snatch'd it—saved it ! and what the mystery might solve, if now such mystery were worth the solving—this scarf (*producing it*) encircled

her. (*abbot takes the scarf with great eagerness*) But all is past ! and Agnes, dear loved Agnes, by the father saved, the son must instantly behold destroyed.

Abbot. (*after having gazed on the scarf with the greatest emotion*) Eternal providence ! Theresa ! princess ! oh, great god of nature ! (*rushing into the sanctuary*)

Ravens. Theresa !—mighty heaven ! (*flourish—the gates are forced*)

enter the PRINCE PALATINE, free knights, crusaders and soldiers.

Prince. First seize yon renegade ! (*free knights seize Ravensburg*) next force the sanctuary ! (*free knights and soldiers enter the sanctuary by force*) and then no more on others shall her fate depend. This arm—(*knights and soldiers bring Agnes from the sanctuary to the front. all the characters following*) Now, while all thoughts are deadened in my heated brain, but those of fury and revenge—thus treason falls, and the vile traitress dies. (*seizing Agnes, and going to stab her with his sword*)

Abbot. (*behind the crowd*) Forbear ! she is your rightful princess !

Prince. Merciful powers ! who dare e'en breathe—

Abbot. (*rushing through the crowd, and approaching the prince*) Here, in these hallowed aisles; here, in the face of heaven, and of man, by all your hopes of future preservation, avow your treason, and your sovereign's wrongs, detested, treacherous, murderous villain ! (*prince much agitated*) see, guilt is on him ! now, ye who had no faith, (*to the monks*) and ye, who trample upon sacred rights, (*to the free knights*) behold how sacred justice is display'd ! there's the usurper, sinking with remorse, and here Manfredi, shedding tears of joy at his regain'd, beloved Theresa's feet !

(*the prince lets his sword fall, and reclines on the arm of Walbourg—Ravensburg flies to Agnes,*

and takes her from the free knights—abbot kneels on one side of Agnes, Ravensburg on the other.

Ravens. Manfredi! sovereign!

Abbot. He knows it—knows, on her supposed decease, this hand inform'd him of Manfredi's motives—and that, disgusted with a sickening world, in calm retirement, he should seek for peace. He sought it here—and in Bellarmin's name, was here most safely shelter'd! when, soon, the daring calumny spread wide, of "traitor"—of "assassin"—and the sad narrative perverted, confirm'd the perjured statement. You'll say I should have answer'd this? no—aware such influence, and such arts, would, with such judges, beat down humble truth, I kept immur'd! and my reported death checking inquiry, whilst the loud world sung forth the slanderer's praise, I could look inward, and exclaim, better for ever undeserved disgrace, than hear applause the heart can never sanction!

Agnes. My lord, (*to Ravensburg*) though lost in wonder, and in joy, and now most certain he proclaim'd me as Manfredi's daughter, to give a color to each cruel charge! yet can I see a fellow creature, torn with such convulsive agony!—go—speak—console him.

Abbot. (to prince) You hear!

Prince. I do! and if Manfredi had, like me, beheld her angel mother's form, the strong resemblance had betray'd the secret, and mad ambition had been sooner crushed! I sue, I supplicate for death—life, life's the dreaded punishment for guilt like mine! come—I implore ye!

Abbot. Tis gone! tis vanish'd! and I, who hated and opposed, now feel my edict surpasses even royal rights! monarchs may spare, yet also they must punish! by my perogative, I can but pardon—be safe within these walls, till higher power determines on your fate. (*the prince is led back*) Now hope we to fulfill a far more welcome office, the union of two hearts, that beat in unison, and that our forth-coming installation, past—

(music without) hark ! they come--the warfare o'er,
the sons of peace approach.

Ravens. (looking out) Oh ! glorious, welcome sight!
and let none say the days of darkness are returned,
when such desert is crown'd with such reward—my
lord, they enter—they expect you.

Abbot. Why, aye , and if my princess will partake—
she will, she will—and tis not there, that I shall seek
reward—tis here ! tis here. (*taking the princesses hand*)

[exeunt]

(music)

SCENE V—*the installation, &c.*

(all the characters discovered)

CHORUS.

Hail, hour of glory !

Hail, hour of glory !

Long o'er our hearts may our abbot sway !

Famed in story,

Long live this hallowed and this happy day !

Abbot. Be ever chronicled this blest event ! and
now my princess shall with me unite to root out secret,
subterraneous justice, and fixing it in fair and open
day, unmask free nights, and hail the dawn of genu-
ine freedom, and enlightened truth !

FINALE.

Now your lofty paeans raise,

To our youthful princess' praise.

Ne'er may such blessed rulers sever—

May our princess live for ever !

END OF THE FREE KNIGHTS.

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